



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
City of Duluth Communications Office

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DATE: 06/10/2011

SUBJECT: Media Advisory: Gypsy Moth eradication in Duluth planned for Sunday, June 12

BY: Pakou Ly, Public Information Coordinator

Media Advisory

What: The Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA) will conduct the gypsy moth eradication treatment on approximately 342 acres of land in the city of Duluth Sunday morning, June 12, assuming weather conditions remain favorable. The treatment will focus on the city's Central Hillside neighborhood. Members of the media are invited to the staging area for video and photograph opportunities, and interviews with MDA staff.

Where: The staging area for the Duluth treatment area will be the Richard I. Bong Memorial Airport, located at 4804 Hammond Road, Superior, WI 54880.

When: Sunday, June 12, 2011
5:30 a.m. – 7:00 a.m. (Times are approximate and are dependent on weather conditions.)

Who: Members of MDA's Gypsy Moth Unit will be available to answer questions about the treatment and operations.

NOTE: For media inquiries on the day of the event, please call the MDA at 651-274-5162.

St. Paul, Minn. – The Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA) is preparing to treat approximately 342 acres of land in the city of Duluth to slow the spread of a gypsy moth infestation identified last summer. Officials will conduct the treatments on Sunday, June 12, 2011 depending on weather conditions.

In 2010, the MDA's statewide gypsy moth monitoring program detected a localized infestation of the destructive tree pest. The treatment area is located in Duluth's Central

Hillside, in an area approximately from North Sixth Avenue E. to North 17th Ave. E. and Skyline Drive to East Fourth Street.

To slow the expansion of the infestation, officials will conduct two aerial applications of

Bacillus thuringiensis var. kurstaki (Btk) over the same area, spaced 5-10 days apart. Btk is a U.S. Environmental Protection Agency-approved bacterium with very low risk for humans or animals other than caterpillars. Btk is widely used within the organic gardening community.

Since 2004, MDA has participated in the national Slow the Spread of Gypsy Moth program directed by the U.S. Forest Service. The majority of its resources have been focused on protecting the forests of the North Shore which are most at risk as gypsy moth spreads westward into the state. Similar Btk treatments have been used for this purpose in Grand Portage in 2008 and in Finland and Clover Valley in 2009. These efforts protect forest health, property values and the state's tourism industry.

Gypsy moths are among America's most destructive tree pests, having caused millions of dollars in damage to Eastern forests. The moths are common in Wisconsin and are now threatening Minnesota. If present in large numbers, gypsy moth caterpillars can defoliate large sections of forest. Oak, poplar, birch and willow are among their preferred hosts. The moths spread slowly on their own, but people can unintentionally help them spread by transporting firewood or other items on which the moths have laid their eggs.

To help area citizens stay informed, the MDA has set up an Arrest the Pest Hotline at **888-545-MOTH**. The hotline will offer the latest details about treatment dates and times. Updates before, during and after the treatments will also be given on MDA's Facebook page (www.facebook.com/mnagriculture) and MDA's Twitter account (www.twitter.com/mnagriculture). MDA's website (www.mda.state.mn.us/gypsymoth) also has information about gypsy moths and control efforts.

The MDA offers the following tips to residents in and around the treatment area:

- For the moth treatment to work, it must begin early in the morning. Residents may be

awakened on that day by the noise of the low-flying airplane. MDA apologizes for any inconvenience;

- The airplane noise may spook pets, so residents may wish to keep them indoors during the treatment;

- The treatment product has no known health effects for humans, but to avoid it residents may wish

to stay indoors during the treatment and keep windows closed for a half hour after application; and

- The residue will not damage a vehicle's finish, but residents may wish to park vehicles indoors to avoid having to wash them after the application. Soapy water will remove any residue on outdoor items.

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